

IN MEMORIAM

BRUCE DALE PARFITT, 7 NOVEMBER 1952–3 SEPTEMBER 2009

Neil A. Harriman

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Botanist, biologist, birder Bruce Dale Parfitt of Johnson, Vermont, died at Vermont Respite House in Williston, 3 September 2009. He was 56. Bruce was born 7 November 1952 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, the son of Dale and Joan (née Barth) Parfitt. From age four during family vacations, he fished, hunted, and camped in Oconto County in the land of the jack pines and sweet ferns “up north.” He graduated from Oshkosh High School in 1970, and earned a bachelor of science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh in 1977. He earned his masters and doctoral degrees from Arizona State University in 1980 and 1991, where he was also herbarium curator and teaching associate. For both degrees, he worked closely with Professor Donald Pinkava, who was instrumental in encouraging Bruce’s interest in cacti.

At the University of Michigan-Flint he was a valued faculty member for 14 years, chair of the biology department from 2004–2007, and director of the university’s herbarium, whose collection grew in size and value under his care. He kept high standards, edited papers relentlessly, challenged assumptions, but lavished his time toward students’ success in the classroom, in the lab, in the field, and in their personal lives. As a result, many became first-generation graduates who found confidence and success in biology—related careers or entered Master’s and Ph.D. programs at top universities.

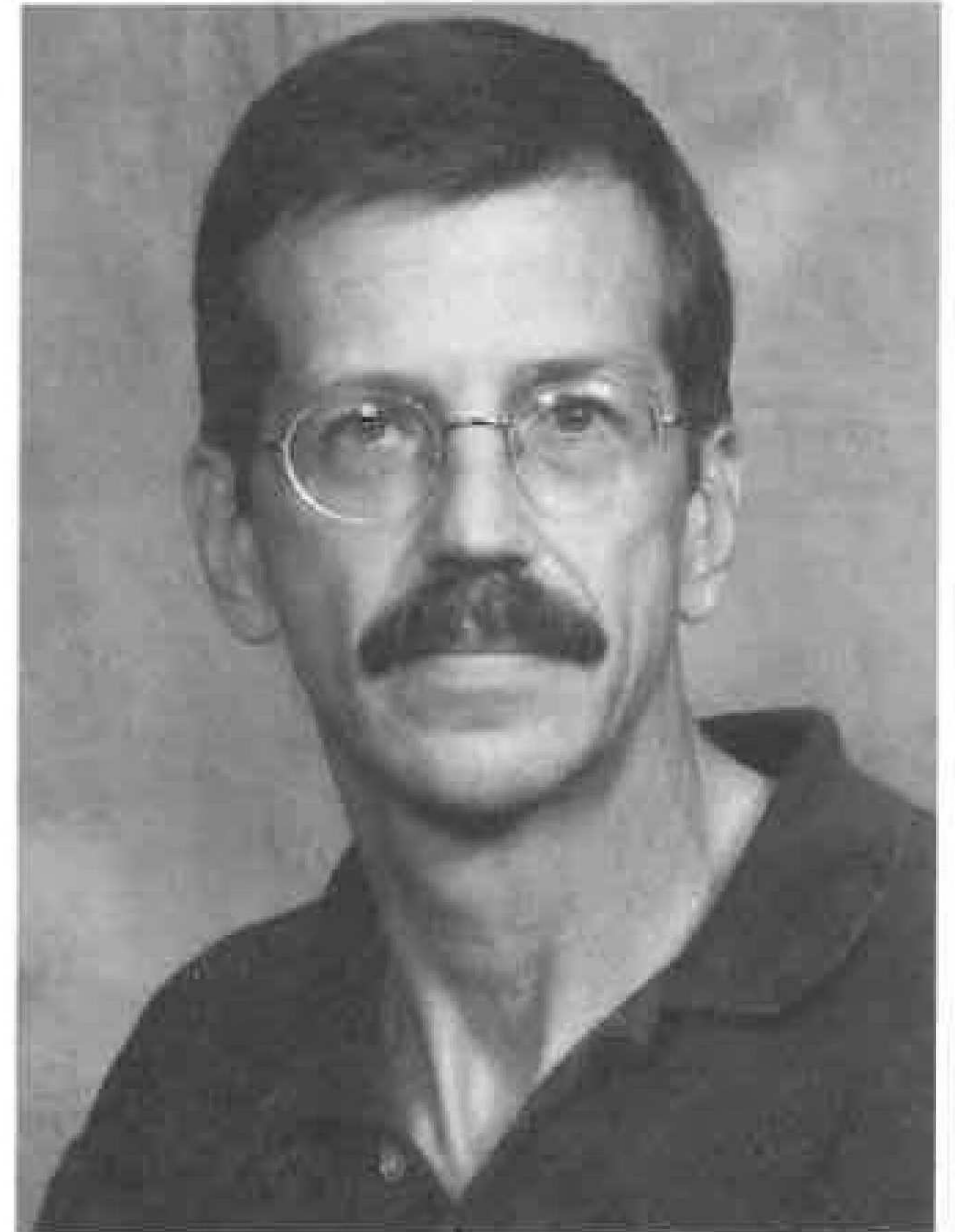
Prior to joining the faculty of UM-Flint, he was a research botanist for the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, and a scientific editor of “Flora of North America” headquartered at the Missouri Botanical Garden. He was a significant contributor to the Ranunculaceae, volume 3, 1997, and the Cactaceae in volume 4, 2003. He also prepared *Opuntia* for the Jepson Manual, 1993. He authored some 40 papers in the literature, beginning with a paper on *Allenrolfea* (Chenopodiaceae) in *Rhodora*, 1977, while he was an undergraduate at UW-Oshkosh.

Among his friends, he was an avid birder, moose watcher, canoeist, Mr. Fix-it, and hunter and planter of trees. He was as tenacious in his friendships as in his opinions. He seemed to apply a scientific approach whether decorating Christmas cookies or designing birdhouses.

And since 1997, he came to love Vermont, first visiting, then buying a place and staying as often as he could at his “Mooseberry Camp” on the Lamoille River in Johnson.

It was while working as a field biologist in 1979 for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management—helicoptered in to hike the remote Hualapai Mountains and to collect, identify, and preserve rare species—that he discovered a new species, named by Barbara Ertter in 2009 as *Potentilla demotica*. It was also in the Hualapai that Bruce developed a blood vessel malformation that was impinging on his spinal column. An unfortunate reaction to diagnostic tests cost him the use of his legs. Undaunted, in 1980, he learned to walk with canes. Similarly, throughout his life he often took on projects of considerable magnitude—building a house, planting trees, restoring riverbanks, and the like.

In late July, 2009, Bruce and his mother invited my wife and me to lunch at an Oshkosh restaurant. Dur-



Courtesy, The University of Michigan-Flint

ing lunch, he told us that he had come to say good-bye. The doctors had exhausted their armamentarium of chemotherapies, and surgery would only delay the inevitable end. Bruce and I went that afternoon to watch the American White Pelicans at a tiny lake nearby; the species was not present in Wisconsin when Bruce was such an avid local birdwatcher. The pelican in myth and folklore represents loyalty and self-sacrifice, a most fitting compliment to Bruce Dale Parfitt.

Editor's Note.—This contribution also appears in *Flora of North America Newsletter* 23(2).

HOWARD L. CLARK, 1941–2009

Kate Clark, wife of Howard L. Clark (Quito, Ecuador), emailed me with sad news that Howard died suddenly on 27 August 2009. Howard was a friend and colleague always willing to help with reviewing manuscripts. “I always will be glad to review papers or anything else for the *exSida*, as I received many of the first issues as an undergraduate (student of John W. Thieret, then at Univ. SW Louisiana, Lafayette) for “free” after making a deal with Lloyd Shinnery to trade my plant collections for *Sida*—I probably never sent enough to be adequate. My first botanical publication was in *Sida*. Yes, that was a few years ago, long before I moved to the amphiscean realm (as John Thieret phrased it).”

I contacted Howard on June 25, 2009, seeking a review of a manuscript submitted to *J. Bot. Res. Inst. Texas*. Of course Howard was more than willing to help and to give of his time (“exceptionally glad” were his words). The resulting correspondence was like rediscovering a close friend from the past. We had a good time catching up and reminiscing about our mutual friend John Thieret (his “professor, mentor, and friend”...and, I might add personally, my mentor and friend). We happily shared stories about Lloyd Shinnery of whom neither one of us met in person. Our friend John Thieret worked closely with Lloyd and *Sida* from the 1960s to early 70s until Lloyd passed away in 1971. Howard said his old copies of *Sida* were safely stored in Atlanta; he even remembered Professor Joe Ewan’s poem to Lloyd Shinnery in response to the first issue of *Sida* (22 Nov 1962).

John W. Thieret (1926–2005) served as Howard’s major professor for his master’s degree in Biology at University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette. Howard studied the Lemnaceae of Louisiana for his M.S., a project Howard started as an undergraduate. Howard and John published together in 1968 *The duckweeds [Lemnaceae] of Minnesota* (*Michigan Bot.* 7:67–76).

Over the last several years Howard had been living and working in Quito, Ecuador. He was working mostly as an ecological consultant (“increasingly, industrial stuff” as Howard put it), but his love was botany. He had set aside for me a copy of a recent botanical publication of his (a Venezuela florula) that he was most proud of.

CLARK, H.[L.], R. LIESNER, P.E. BERRY, A. FERNANDEZ, G. AYMARD, AND P. MAQUIRINO. 2000. Catálogo anotado de la flora del área de San Carlos de Río Negro, Venezuela. *Scientia Guianae* (Caracas) 11:101–333 + 21 color photos. (103 illustrations by B. Manara).

“For 4.5 years (‘79–’81), we (my wife is an ichthyologist, but also a good botanist who worked for Joe Ewan for a year at the Tulane herbarium) lived in San Carlos de Rio Negro, Venezuela, where the soil had a lot of outwash quartz sands from the tepuis and from the Shield, and the flora had a lot of connection to the strange stuff above us on the shield and tepuis. San Carlos is across the Rio Negro from Colombia, about 15 km south of the Rio Casiquiare, and about 60 km north of Brasil. It took many years, but I finally published a florula/checklist (in a pub. more obscure than *Sida*) for there.” This florula is surely a testament to the botanist Howard L. Clark.

I’m so sorry and my heart is saddened to lose a friend and colleague. Thanks, Howard, for all of your contributions to science!—Barney L. Lipscomb, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-4025, U.S.A.